

**STATE ARCHIVES OF MICHIGAN**  
**Michigan Historical Center**  
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**PHOTOGRAPHY COLLECTION**

The State Archives of Michigan has the largest collection of historical photographs in the state dealing exclusively with Michigan. This collection now numbers about 330,000 items, and mirrors the rich heritage of the state and documents almost every aspect of life in Michigan, especially for the period 1850-1950. The images are divided into four main divisions:

1. The General Photo Collection - nearly 50,000 of the most significant and most used photographs are arranged alphabetically by subject from Apiaries to Zoos. Particularly important holdings deal with Michigan lumbering, Great Lakes shipping, Michigan mining, urban and rural life styles, and Michigan community scenes. The photos are kept in metal file cabinets in double-weight acid-free folders, approximately 20 per folder. A notebook of "Subject Headings" is available in the Reference Room. There is also a card index of places and of more specific subjects. The collection is also available on microfilm, and can easily be used independently by researchers in the Microfilm Area of the Reference Room. (These begin at roll #6001).
2. The Biography Collection - contains about 20,000 portraits of Michigan residents past and present. They are kept in acid-free envelopes, and are arranged alphabetically by last name. A card index to all these individuals is readily available in the Reference Room. These portraits range from early carte de visite prints to modern 8"x10" glossies. There are also a few oversize and early image (daguerreotypes, ambrotypes, tintypes) portraits. These portraits range from all the governors of the state and other prominent persons to Civil War soldiers and ordinary citizens.
3. Special Collections - are collections from government agencies and private donors which are kept as separate entities. They range from vast groups of photos and negatives numbering in the thousands to three unique nature prints. There are large collections from state departments, such as Natural Resources, Public Health, and Transportation. Private donations include images of Great Lakes vessels collected by Edwin Brown, DeWitt Watson, and Earl Crandall. Photos of Michigan scenes used to manufacture postcards are found in collections of the Albertype Company, Charles Childs, and Stanley Kufta, pertaining mostly to the western portion of the state.
4. The Negative Collection - contains nearly 20,000 4"x5" copy negatives of images in the holdings for which prints have been reproduced at some time in the past or which were made for preservation purposes. Almost any image in the Archives can be reproduced for a nominal cost; a current Price List is available in the Reference Room. Xerox copies for most images can also be provided at minimal rates.

All images in the State Archives have come by transmittal from government agencies or by donation from private citizens, and the staff is anxious to consider items to add to the photographic collections. (Please contact the Archives at [517] 373-1415). The Archives collects only black and white prints due to the unstable nature of color photos. Persons interested in the type of photographs available can consult *Pictorial History of Michigan*

by George S. May, published by the Michigan Historical Commission in 1967-1969. Historical research in the photographic holdings of the State Archives is open to all the public, and interested persons are encouraged to contact the Archives to discuss their needs and to arrange a visit.